



3rd March 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Social Media and Online Conduct

Over recent weeks we have dealt with an increasing number of issues relating to students' communication on social media outside of school time. These issues, often stemming from children using apps like Snapchat or TikTok, can cause considerable upset, anxiety and distraction for students. Friendship problems, arguments or disagreements are commonly made much worse and harder to resolve when social media is involved. Our priority in school is to ensure our students recover quickly from the disruption they have experienced over the last two years; we do not wish to spend time addressing issues on social media that do not relate to students' learning and progress and often have nothing to do with their time in school.

While we understand that social media plays a significant part in young people's lives and that it can be difficult for parents and carers who are unfamiliar with it to understand, it is important that children are guided to use it sensibly, safely and respectfully. Students hear this message in school regularly through our assemblies, form time activities and our Personal Development curriculum. They are reminded frequently of their responsibilities and our expectations. Unfortunately, there is only so much that we as a school can do to prevent issues arising without your support. It is important, particularly in the case of younger students, that the use of social media is monitored closely by parents and carers and that children understand what to do if they feel upset, uncertain or uncomfortable about what they read or see. Please consider removing apps or blocking contacts that cause concern and be mindful that most social media apps have age restrictions of 13+ and even then, that is with parental supervision and consent.

Some of this content that students post and share is highly offensive, personal and upsetting to members of the school community and this is something we will not tolerate. As well as ensuring sanctions are in place for those who create and share inappropriate content, we will also inform our safer schools police officer. Please can I ask you to speak to your child(ren) about this, ensuring that they 'unfollow' or 'block' and 'report' accounts that could be offensive to students or staff.

Equally students that film other students / staff, and share these images will have consequences in line with our behaviour for learning policy. We will not tolerate any behaviour where students find it acceptable to film others to intimidate, ridicule or bring the school into disrepute.

It is important to recognise and thank the overwhelming majority of students who rise to our expectations every day by working hard, behaving respectfully and engaging positively in the life of the school. Thank you for your partnership, understanding and support.

Yours faithfully,

Mr I Critchley

Principal